

Meet your Executive Council for 2008-09

We welcome several new members to the provincial executive this year. All positions, except for president and executive director are filled by CPCO members who are actively employed as principals or vice-principals in various boards around the province. The Executive Council represents a wide range of experiences and interests. We invited them to share their insights as to what is the most important skill or area of expertise that a principal needs today, to recommend any books or articles that would assist a first-year principal in their role as instructional leader, to tell us about someone who was influential in shaping their careers or to share any advice they had to help administrators balance their work and personal life. We thank them for their commitment to Catholic education and their work on our behalf with CPCO.



Joan Duckitt, *President*

Joan Duckitt has been a member of CPCO since her appointment as a principal in 1997. She was appointed elementary councillor in 2004 and was re-elected to that position at the CPCO Annual General Meeting in April 2005. Joan was vice-president in 2006, president-elect in 2007 and is the current president of CPCO.

Joan has been a school administrator in both the Huron-Perth Catholic DSB and the London District Catholic School Board. In both districts, she has been an active member of CPCO, serving on the CPCO Council of District Representatives, as president of the Huron-Perth Principals' Association and co-chair of the 2001 London District CPCO Professional Development Committee.

Joan's ongoing interest is evident in her involvement as a member of the CPCO Western Region Association where she has performed the duties of secretary, treasurer and chairperson. She received recognition for her involvement by receiving a Dedication to CPCO award in 2006.

At the provincial level, Joan has served as executive liaison to the Professional Development, Issues in Catholic Education and Communications Committees. Joan has been CPCO's representative on the *When Faith Meets Pedagogy* planning committee and served on the board of directors of the Catholic Curriculum Corporation.

There are many skills that are required of a leader today. These can be read about in books and learned. What is more important are the attributes of a leader. The principal of today needs to be a person of integrity. Basing one's words, actions and decisions on an internally consistent framework or values is key. For Catholic principals and vice-principals this framework is our faith. Know your faith, demonstrate your faith and be ready to stand up for what you believe in.

Joan looks forward to serving the Catholic principals and vice-principals of Ontario as president of CPCO.



Lou Rocha, *Executive Director*

Lou Rocha is beginning his ninth year as executive director of CPCO. This is his 36th year in Catholic education. He has served as teacher, vice-principal and principal in the Toronto Catholic DSB from which he is currently seconded. Together with the CPCO staff, Lou supports the membership through the Executive Council, five standing

committees, the Council of District Representatives and the district contract committees. He works closely with provincial organizations and government bodies including the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education, the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Ministry of Education and the Ontario College of Teachers. He is also a current board member of the Institute for Catholic Education, Curriculum Services Canada and the Catholic Curriculum Delivery Organization.

Throughout his early career Lou sought opportunities to work in voluntary organizations as both a teacher and administrator. He has a keen interest in creating synergies that increase the human capital of organizations while enhancing services for members. He enjoyed many opportunities in his board's athletic association, the principals' association and at the provincial council. He recalls the late Joe Legault as his first supporter and mentor in the area of leadership. At the provincial level Lou has thoroughly enjoyed the collaboration with the provincial executive and with the leaders of the other provincial organizations and the Ministry, especially at the Institute for Education Leadership.

His current professional reading includes research and reviews on organizational development. Influential books include *Good To Great* by Jim Collins and *Improving Connections Between Government and Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations* by Kathy L. Brock. Lou is a member of the Canadian Society of Association Executives and has spoken on communications and advocacy.

He strongly believes that principals are the key factor in developing and maintaining effective school communities. He believes that emotional intelligence is needed for nurturing positive relationships with students, parents, teachers and supervisors. Lou believes that work-life balance is necessary for physical, mental and emotional health. Too many members are working at school on weekends and Lou advises them to plan “down time” each week to reflect and regroup. He also advises CPCO members to “*Celebrate every success in your community; protect the gift of Catholic education; and empower others to do the first two.*”



Daniel Tighe, Past-president

Dan Tighe served as president of The Catholic Principals’ Council of Ontario during the 2007-08 school year and currently holds the office of past-president. He was first elected to the provincial executive as secondary councillor in 2004 after having served as chairperson of the Member Security Committee. During that time, Dan played a key role in the organization

of CPCO’s annual Employment Services Seminar and was a valuable resource to local principal groups seeking to improve the terms and conditions of their employment. Dan has also represented Catholic principals on the provincial Group Benefits Advisory Committee playing an active role in advocating for improved disability and insurance benefits. As president he was best known for his efforts in advancing the cause of CPCO through forging partnerships and building relationships with our many partner groups.

Dan was recognized for his dedication to CPCO by the St. Clair Catholic DSB’s Principal and Vice-Principal Association in 2006. In February 2007 he was honoured by The Learning Partnership as one of Canada’s Outstanding Principals for his efforts to improve student learning at Ursuline College Chatham Catholic Secondary School. Dan recently returned to the St. Clair Catholic DSB as principal of St. Christopher Catholic Secondary School in Sarnia.

Dan attended Assumption College Secondary School in Windsor which, at the time, was run by the Basilian Fathers. The school motto, “Teach me goodness, discipline and knowledge” was more than just a collection of words. The Basilians believed in education of the whole child and professional learning communities long before either catch phrase became fashionable. More importantly Dan learned that teaching was a vocation and not just a profession. It is sad that many of the teaching orders like the Basilians and the Ursuline Sisters have lost much of their influence in education.

Dan has had the good fortune to meet and hear many outstanding leaders from both the private and public sectors. The common thread amongst these gifted individuals is their love of reading and their recognition that true leaders find wisdom in history, anthropology, science, religion, psychology and sociology. He was greatly intrigued with a recent book by Roger Martin, Dean of the Rotman School of Management, entitled *The Opposable Mind: How Successful Leaders Win Through Integrated Thinking*. The underlying principles contained therein are very relevant to future leaders in education.



Paul Lacalamita, President-elect

Paul Lacalamita is the principal of St. David Catholic Secondary School in Waterloo. He has also served as a vice-principal in the secondary panel, as principal in the elementary panel and as the board’s arts consultant and teacher.

He has represented his association as a member of CPCO’s Council of District Representatives and has been an active member of CPCO for the last six years through his involvement with the Constitution and Steering (AGM) Committees, acting both as committee member and chair. Paul served as a secondary councillor on the Executive Council in 2007-08.

Paul has represented CPCO at the Institute for Catholic Education panel discussion regarding EQAO testing, at the Ontario College of Teachers panel discussion regarding Teacher Mentorship/Induction programs, on the panel discussion regarding Virtues Education as presented by Bishop Durocher and on the Ministry’s evaluation team for principal appraisals.

Paul will serve as the executive liaison to the Political Action and Professional Services Committees this year. As president-elect, Paul looks forward to working with the president and executive members to continue the exemplary work of past executives who have brought a strong and unified voice to the Ministry for Catholic schools and principals in this province.

Paul is very thankful for the guidance, support and encouragement of his colleagues in CPCO. This has had a major impact on the decisions he has made for the next few of years.

The art of listening (and hearing) and the ability to find and recognize an individual’s gifts are probably the most essential skills of an effective principal in today’s schools and culture. Often a principal will encounter parents, students and staff who need to be heard or are experiencing some degree of anxiety or stress from their work in education or from parenting in a secular world. The servant leadership model of our vocation suggests that an effective Catholic school principal seek to ascertain an authentic understanding of every situation and of the people in those situations.

Paul suggests that you read DuFour’s *On Common Ground* given today’s focus on rich data, PLC’s, authentic instruction and assessment. Regarding Catholic education, he would highly recommend Fr. Jim Mulligan’s book: *Catholic Education - Ensuring A Future*.

The biggest challenge for administrators is time. The continual downloading of tasks to a principal’s work day continues to be an issue. To balance these stresses, it is important to keep celebrating the accomplishments of your students and/or staff and to make the establishment of an authentic Catholic community a priority in your school. Peace and joy are often the fruits of one’s labour in this regard.



Joe Czackowski, Vice-president

Joe Czackowski has been an administrator with the Thunder Bay Catholic DSB for the past 11 years. He is presently the principal of St. Margaret School. This will be his second year on the CPCO Executive Council. He served as chair of the Member Security Committee for three years and as president of his local association for three years.

Joe has always been very fortunate to have his family's encouragement and support of his career aspirations. Joe feels that a successful school will be administered by a principal who has the support of the staff and the involvement of the community. The principal's primary role must be to serve as leader for student learning in a Catholic environment. The principal working with his/her own teacher skill sets must rally staff and students, parents and the community of partners around a common goal of raising student performance. The principal's approach to the multiplicity of these demands for instructional leadership and management responsibilities will develop a collaborative school culture. Communication and relationship building are the most important skills a principal needs today to be effective in the role of a Catholic leader, for school accountability, shared responsibility and for school improvement.

As a first-year principal there is a great demand on time and a great learning curve in the role of instructional leader. It is important to develop a framework to analyze problems quickly, develop school plans, make sound decisions and communicate all these sensitively to teachers, parents, students, senior staff and the community. Joe recommends CPCO's *Catholic School Administrator's Toolkit* as an excellent resource that has a variety of educational materials and provides ideas on many of the issues and situations that principals deal with on a regular basis. The *Toolkit* is also a valuable resource for seasoned principals.

Balancing work life and personal life is an ongoing challenge for school administrators. In the educational environment it is important to have a mentor or network of principals whom you can call frequently for advice or just to share stories and ideas. It is also important to have friends, hobbies and interests outside of the educational setting.



Carole Allen, Treasurer

Carole Allen has worked as an administrator with the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB for the past ten years. This will be her third year on the CPCO Executive Council. She has served on her local principal/vice-principal association for seven years and this coming year, she will be the past-president.

Carole credits the support of colleagues in Simcoe Muskoka as well as CPCO for helping to shape her career. She encourages

principals to nurture their decision-making skills. Principals have such an important impact on students, staff and parents and need to take time to make decisions wisely based on what will be the best outcome for the students.

Carole recommends the book *Jesus CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership* by Laurie Beth Jones as a must-read for first-year principals to assist them in their roles as instructional leaders.

To balance your work-life commitments, Carole's advice is to spend lots of time with your students; they will keep you grounded and calm, and spend lots of time with your family; they will keep you happy.

Carole is excited about the opportunity to work with the CPCO Executive Council, in providing support to principals and vice-principals across the province. As treasurer, Carole will serve as executive liaison to the Finance Committee. She is looking forward to working with the executive to advocate for continued excellence in Catholic education and in serving the membership of CPCO.



Bill Beaucage, Elementary Councillor

For the past eight years Bill has served as a principal with the Superior North Catholic DSB. He has worked in three different elementary schools in three very different rural communities within the board. As an individual who enjoys rising to new challenges with enthusiasm and commitment, this experience has provided him with many different insights into the many exceptional and distinctive learning opportunities that are taking place for students as well as the unique challenges these individual school communities face. From this experience, Bill has gained immeasurable opportunity to broaden and develop his leadership skills as a school administrator and instructional leader. Presently, he is the principal of St. Edward Catholic School in Nipigon.

Bill has been an active member in the Superior North Catholic Principals' Association and has represented his colleagues as president and district representative for the past six years. He has also served as a professional development representative and on the local association's terms and conditions team.

Bill's experience with the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario has allowed him the pleasure of being active in a variety of roles which includes being a member of the Constitution Committee for six years, serving as chairperson this past year. Presently he is a presenter, facilitator and moderator of a web conference designed for PQP candidates on the *Ontario Curriculum Unit Planner*. He is also a member of the *Catholic School Administrator's Toolkit* team. He is looking forward to the opportunity to serve as elementary councillor on the Executive Council for the first time this year.

Catholic Education - A Light of Truth by Monsignor Dennis Murphy is recommended for Catholic principals who truly care about Catholic education. It will help administrators develop a

deeper understanding of our history as a Catholic community and of the challenges before us. Reading these articles will also develop a deeper sense and awareness of our vocation, our calling and the magnitude of our mission in the faith development of the students entrusted to our care.

Bill also recommends *Principals and Student Achievement - What the Research Says* by Kathleen Cotton, a research associate with the School Improvement Program of the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. She identifies 26 essential traits and behaviours of effective principals to show how they achieve success as instructional leaders. The book examines how certain practices such as communication and interaction, classroom observation and feedback to students, recognition of students and staff achievement, role modeling, support of professional development of staff and dedication to a safe and orderly school environment can affect student achievement. At a time when principals are being asked to do more and be more accountable, this book provides some solid ideas and suggestions about what principals should do to improve academic achievement for all students.

Hard work does have a place in our lives, but a sense of leisure and a spirit of play need space as well. Bill has learned that planning his time is very important. Work priorities can easily distract us from what is truly important and needed in our lives. Balance in his career, life, relationships and home takes planning, scheduling and action. He tries his best to keep Wednesday evenings free so that he can get home early and spend time with his family. Flexibility in working at home in the evening allows for more contact time with the family. In our hectic and frantic careers of being instructional and curriculum leaders in school communities, it is extremely important to remember that these “moments of time” that we are able to spend outside of our careers as principals are truly gifts which we must cherish and appreciate.



David Giroux, Elementary Councillor

David Giroux has been a principal with the Renfrew County Catholic DSB since December 1999. For the past five years, he has been the principal of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School in Renfrew. Since January 2008, he has also been one of two school effectiveness principals in his board. He remains as a part-time principal and also assists 10 other

elementary schools within the board on the School Effectiveness Framework as well as enhancing overall student achievement in literacy and numeracy.

For the past two years, he has been the president of the local principal/vice-principal association and he sits on several board level committees including terms and conditions. Working for the Renfrew Catholic DSB is an excellent leadership opportunity. The Board Leadership team comprised of senior administration, principals, vice-principals and managers work together like a family. The leaders in schools enjoy strong relations with senior administration and trustees. They have great autonomy in their

schools and are expected to live out the board’s vision statement as they bring students, staff and the greater community to better know Jesus.

This is his first year in the role of elementary councillor. David hopes that he can use his gifts and talents to ensure the strength and vitality of Catholic education in the province for many years to come.

David feels that one of the most important skills or areas of expertise that a principal needs today is to have strong emotional intelligence. A principal must be able to develop authentic relationships with students, staff, parents and the wider community. When you can forge authentic relationships, it assists problem-solving in a variety of situations. It has been his experience that staff will go above and beyond the call of duty for a leader whom they feel cares about them as people and shows appreciation and respect for whatever role they play within the school. A big part of the role of a principal is dealing with broken relationships. An effective leader must be able to heal these situations within the framework of gospel values and Catholic social teachings. Being a strong emotional leader will assist with many of the decisions that a principal must make on a daily basis.

In today’s culture of student achievement, it is important for a principal to have strong skills as an instructional leader. Some of the basic tenets that would assist a principal with becoming an instructional leader would involve an overall understanding of the various curriculum documents. Having an understanding of the School Effectiveness Framework is important since it outlines all of the pedagogical best practices that should be happening in our schools. An instructional leader should have a solid understanding of Balanced Literacy and have a good understanding of the four instructional approaches for both reading and writing. The 2003 document *A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading* has a wealth of information that is well explained in developing a better understanding in how children learn to read and what the important components are in a strong literacy program. The newer ministry documents released about junior literacy and numeracy are also excellent tools. David recommends Tony Stead’s 2001 book *Is That a Fact? Teaching Non-Fiction Writing K-3* for the teaching of non-fiction writing. There are a number of great DVDs put out by the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat that a new principal should watch along with the video clips of teachers at www.curriculum.org since they show excellence in action. This should be a great beginning for any principal to better develop his/her skills as an instructional leader.



Jim Minello, Secondary Councillor

Jim has been employed with the Windsor Essex Catholic DSB for 29 years. He served five years as vice-principal and four years as principal. He is currently assigned to Holy Names High School in Windsor, which is comprised of 1,460 students, 87 teachers and two vice-principals.

Jim is beginning his third year as secondary councillor and it has been a pleasure to serve the members in this

capacity. He is looking forward to a very important year as we move forward with our strategic planning and the restructuring of the staff.

When Jim began teaching, he was hired by the private board to work for the Basilian Fathers at Assumption College School in Windsor. The administrators were Principal Fr. Frank McCabe and Vice-principal Fr. Leon Hart. Both men were exceptional leaders and inspired Jim with their love of kids, education, people and life. The school's motto was, "Teach me Goodness, Discipline, and Knowledge" and the Basilians did a wonderful job of instilling that creed into everyone who entered their community. The second great influence in his career was the nine years he spent teaching at St. Michael's Alternative School. The students in that program taught him a great deal about reaching students who were hard to serve. They forced the teachers to learn new and better ways to motivate them because detentions and suspensions did not work.

Learning to communicate effectively with as many of our partners as possible is invaluable. Jim thinks it is important for principals to have as many different education experiences as possible before assuming a leadership role. This exposes one to many new opportunities to communicate and interact with a wide variety of partners in our education communities.

The *New Principal's Field Book* by Pam Robbins and Harvey Alvy is an excellent resource that Jim found very helpful in his first year. *The Role of the Principal* by Eric Roher is also very good. In addition he recommends CPCO's *Catholic School Administrator's Toolkit* as a valuable source of information for any new administrator.

Jim advises new principals and vice-principals to keep your family as your priority and keep up with any outside interests. Continue learning!



Share Your Story...

CPCO invites submissions to its quarterly magazine, *Principal Connections*. We are always looking for good news stories from our members across the province. Share your experiences, strategies and celebrations with your colleagues.

- If there has been a special event in your school or school community of provincial interest, tell us about it.
- If you or a colleague has received special recognition, spread the news.
- If you are especially proud of a staff member, a student, a project or a unique program, let us know.
- If you have met a special or difficult challenge in your school, your colleagues would like to hear about it.
- If you have read a book that you think would be of interest to the membership, send us a book review.
- If you know about an exciting story happening in the school of one of your colleagues, tell us. We'll follow up on your lead.

Articles should be approximately 700 words and pictures (minimum 300 dpi resolution) are always a great addition.

Tell us your story through photos. Send us the pictures with a description of the activity.

There are a number of ways to submit a story or article. You can write it yourself and e-mail it to editor@cpco.on.ca. Don't have time to write? Let us know and we can arrange to do an interview by telephone or in person if you are located close to the GTA. Some people prefer to submit the information in point form and ask us to do the writing.

We truly appreciate all contributions by our members. Please understand, however, that submission does not automatically guarantee publication and we reserve the right to edit all material.

The deadline for articles for the winter issue of *Principal Connections* is **Oct. 20, 2008**. If you have any submissions, questions or suggestions regarding *Principal Connections*, contact the editor through the CPCO office.

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Happy writing!